

NEWS RELEASE

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Four Rock Island Area Men Charged in Separate Indictments with Gun, Drug Offenses

Rock Island, IL- Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that a federal grand jury has returned indictments charging four Rock Island area men with gun and drug offenses in separate, unrelated cases.

Tyland Darnell Beason, age 19, of 1118 10th Street, Rock Island, Illinois, was charged with possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine and possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking offense. The indictment alleges Beason possessed and carried a .22 caliber revolver and crack cocaine on August 25, 2006. Beason was previously charged with the offenses in a criminal complaint filed on August 25, 2006, alleging Beason was stopped by Rock Island Police Department officers on patrol in the area of 5th Street and 15th Avenue. According to the affidavit filed in support of the complaint, when officers questioned Beason, he threw a cigar wrapping filled with marijuana on the patrol vehicle's trunk. As the officer reached to detain Beason, he pulled away and attempted to run. After a short foot pursuit, the officers secured Beason and recovered a loaded .22 caliber revolver from Beason's pants pocket. Officers allegedly recovered approximately 25 to 30 rocks of crack cocaine, with a total approximate weight of 2.9 grams from another pants pocket, and \$229 in cash.

In a separate, unrelated indictment, **Ezekiel Alexander Darnl Hunter**, age 20, of 1705 6th Street, Rock Island, was charged with possession with intent to distribute five or more grams of crack cocaine in Rock Island on March 21, 2006; possessing and carrying a firearm, a 9 mm handgun, during a drug trafficking crime on March 21, 2006; and possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine on September 4, 2006.

Jason Lee Morgan, age 27, of 1127 East 9th Street, Milan, Illinois was also charged, in a separate indictment, with possession with intent to distribute five grams or more of crack cocaine in Rock Island on August 30, 2006.

Marcus Antonio Kelly, also known as "Little Lord," age 20, of 1405 3rd Street, Rock Island, was charged in an unrelated indictment with possession of a firearm, a .38 caliber revolver, by a felon, on July 27, 2006, in Rock Island, Illinois.

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The cases are the result of investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Quad Cities Federal Gang Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Rock Island Police Department. The cases against Beason, Hunter and Morgan are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sara L. Darrow; Assistant U.S. Attorney John K. Mechochko is prosecuting the case against Kelly.

If convicted, the maximum statutory penalty for possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine is up to 20 years in prison; for five or more grams of crack cocaine, the penalty is five to 40 years in prison. If a defendant has a prior felony drug conviction, the penalty for possession with intent to distribute five or more grams of crack cocaine increases to a mandatory minimum 10 years to life in prison. For possession of firearm during a drug trafficking offense, the penalty is a mandatory five years to life imprisonment to be served consecutive to any prison term ordered for the underlying drug trafficking offense. If convicted for possession of a firearm as a felon, the statutory penalty is up to 10 years in prison.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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